



Substantial New Investments in Our Schools

"Our children are our future. We've got to insist on excellence in education NOW."

– Governor Gary Locke's Speech to the Washington State School Director's Association
November 18, 1999

WASHINGTON STATE'S economic prosperity provides an excellent opportunity to make significant new investments in our public schools. Governor Locke believes it is our obligation to provide excellent schools for our children so they can meet the challenges of the 21st century. We are moving from education reform to results with tough academic standards for kindergarten through grade 12. Improvements in learning are evident when we compare student achievement with these standards in the state's new 4th, 7th, and 10th grade tests. At the same time, a new system will hold schools accountable for continuing to improve student performance.

But too many students still do not achieve the standards that we know are important for their futures. For all students to build a bright future for themselves, their families, and their communities, we have to act now to improve the funding and performance of our schools.

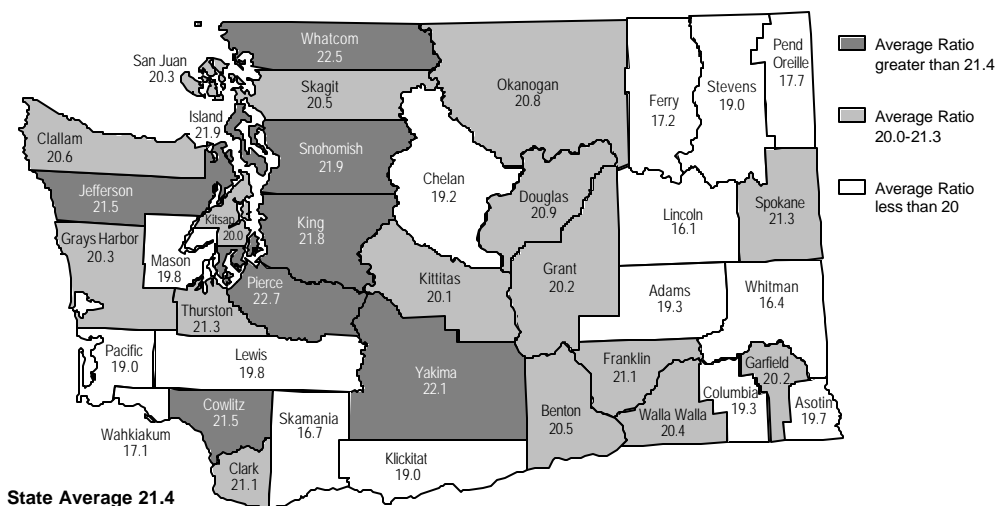
More Attention Will Help Every Child Learn

Washington ranks 48th among the 50 states in the ratio of students to teachers in our public schools. A key objective for Governor Locke is reducing class sizes, particularly in the elementary grades. More high quality teachers will help students improve their performance by increasing the individual attention they receive. Smaller classes also help improve the classroom environment by reducing behavior problems among children.

Students per Elementary Teacher, Grades K-6, 1998-99

Elementary Staff Ratios

Students per Elementary Teacher, Grades K-6, 1998-99



SOURCE: Legislative Evaluation and Accountability Program

Growing Demands on Teachers, Students, and Parents

Teaching is becoming an increasingly more difficult and demanding job, especially in Washington where class sizes are among the largest in the nation. Teachers, students, and parents alike all have large demands on their time and attention. Business and industry now expect high skills and long hours from adults. And ever-present threats from drugs, alcohol, and violence can lead to behavior problems for children. As families face these challenges, children need more time and attention from adults to help them perform well in school.

But a three-fold increase in children living in single parent homes from 1960 to 1990 shows that a growing number of children have fewer adults in their lives to help with school work. With over 70 percent of Washington's children living in homes with single parents – or in which both parents work – there is often less time available to help children with school work.

Adding Teachers to Provide More Time for Students

This supplemental budget adds 1,000 new teachers to Washington schools beginning in the next school year – a major initial step in the Governor's long-term plan to reduce elementary school class sizes and improve learning opportunities for all children.

When teachers have more time and fewer students, they can focus more attention on individual students and communicate better with parents. Teachers with smaller classes concentrate more on improving children's learning skills, and less on correcting behavior problems. Students from smaller elementary school classes achieve real improvements in performance. Most importantly, research shows that the gains they make are sustained throughout their education. This happens because:

- **Teachers know more about each student's individual learning needs.** They use their teaching skills to more effectively reach their students.
- **Struggling students get more help** in a smaller class because teachers identify problems earlier and help students catch up quickly.
- **High-achieving students get the attention from teachers they need** to make their classroom experience more challenging.

A Long-Term Plan for Investing in Local Schools

The wisest investment any state can make is in education; but it is teachers, parents, and local school communities that know best how to help their children succeed. With economic prosperity comes the ability to invest in children in every part of the state. In addition to the budget enhancements proposed in the supplemental budget, Governor Locke proposes a Learning Improvement Property Tax Credit to give all communities the chance to increase their investment in local schools – by keeping more of the property tax revenues generated in their communities.

Learning Improvement Property Tax Credit

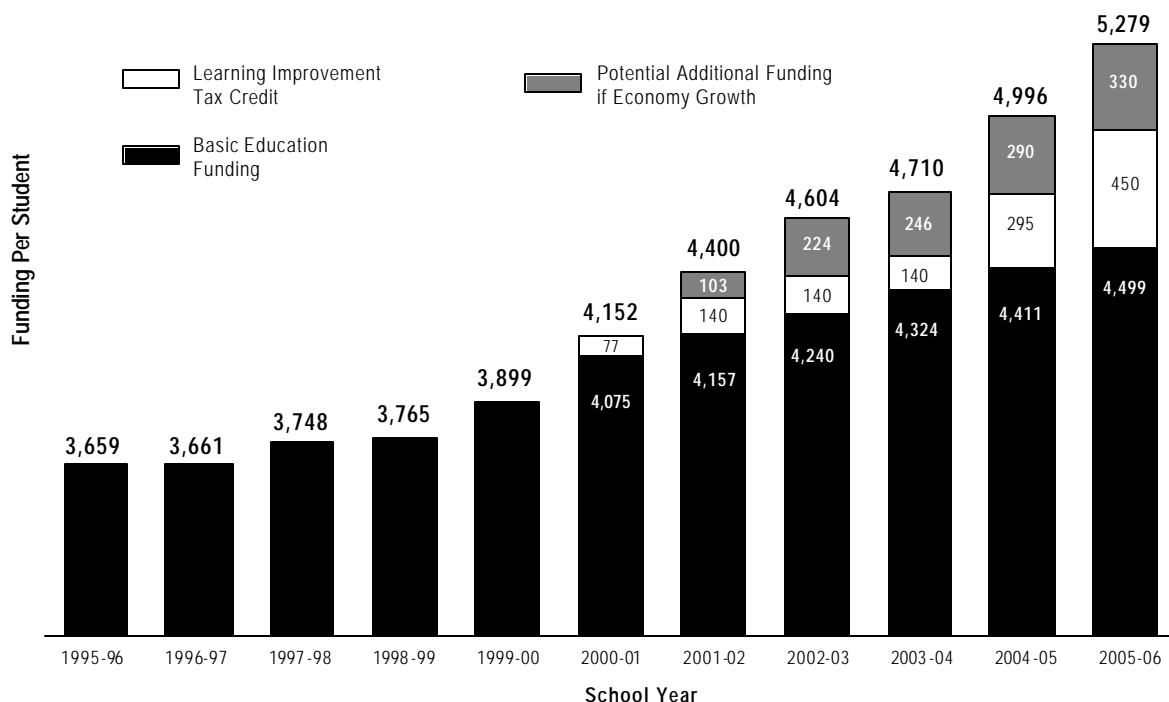
The Governor's Learning Improvement Property Tax Credit strengthens local control and funding of schools by allowing more state property tax dollars to remain in local districts that choose to invest in schools. It directs more than \$1 billion in new revenue resources for public schools over the next five years to reduce class sizes and improve learning in all of our schools.

Every local district will be authorized to use tax credit funds to:

- **Continue efforts to reduce class sizes** in grades K-6.
- **Offer extended learning opportunities** including before and after school, weekend, summer, and full-day kindergarten programs chosen by local schools to improve student achievement in any grade or grades from kindergarten through 12.
- **Offer optional developmental preschool** programs designed to prepare pre-kindergarten children for successful learning.
- **Make improvements to buildings and facilities as needed** to accommodate the smaller class sizes and new programs that they choose to implement with tax credit funding.

By allowing local communities to credit local taxes against the state property tax levy, the Learning Improvement Tax Credit is "tax neutral" to property taxpayers. School boards throughout the state will have the task of voting to approve the new tax credit for their local schools. Since school boards are directly accountable to their voters, they will also need to keep their communities informed about the quality of their schools and how the district is utilizing the new tax credit funding to improve student achievement.

Increasing Per Student Funding in K-12 Schools with Tax Credits



Supporting High Quality Teaching and School Leadership

The Governor believes that our schools must not only increase the quantity of attention we give to students, but also improve the quality of our educators. Our efforts to improve student achievement by reducing class sizes will ring hollow if we do not also make sure we have quality teachers in every classroom.

The Governor's supplemental budget proposal includes several teacher quality and school leadership measures:

- **Recruiting New Teachers in Critical Areas:** To address teacher shortages in critical areas such as math, science, and special education, the Governor proposes a conditional scholarship program providing loans of up to \$4,000 annually to 200 outstanding college students.

Recipients of these loans will have to maintain a 3.0 or better grade point average in college, and can repay their loan obligation by teaching for two years in a Washington public school for every \$4,000 they receive. Proposed funding: \$900,000 GF-S.



- **Testing Beginning Teachers:** Under this proposal, all applicants to teacher training programs must – prior to admission – demonstrate a mastery of basic skills in reading, writing, communications, and mathematics through a uniform statewide test. Then, before being certified as a teacher, each candidate must demonstrate mastery of the subject areas they will teach and knowledge of effective teaching techniques. Proposed funding: \$200,000 GF-S.
- **Professional Development for Teachers:** Employers throughout Washington State have to provide more training, coordination, and staff development to their workforces. The 1999 Legislature provided funding to add three days onto the current school year contracts for all teachers, so that school building staff can spend time together on professional development to gain the additional skills and strategies that staff need to help their students reach higher academic standards.

The Legislature provided critical time for teacher professional development. The training funds in this proposal help districts pay for needed materials, speakers, trainers, and other related costs so that schools can take full advantage of the new professional development days. Proposed funding: \$5.2 million GF-S.

- **Pay Bonuses for Outstanding Teachers:** The 1999 Legislature supported the Governor's request to establish a way to reward accomplished professionals in the teaching profession. A 15 percent pay bonus provision was approved to recognize teachers when they achieve the rigorous standards of the National Board for Professional Teacher Certification. The original 1999-01 biennial budget, however, capped funding for bonuses to a maximum of 45 teachers in school year 2000-01, and provided an insufficient appropriation to fully fund bonuses for every teacher now expected to achieve National Board certification in the current biennium. The Governor proposes full funding for the cost of well-deserved annual bonuses for all National Board certified teachers. Proposed funding: \$100,000 GF-S.
- **Principal/Administrator Internship Program:** With our education system moving to hold schools more accountable for student learning, the Governor believes we must do more to ensure that our schools have well-prepared leaders. Principal shortages make it increasingly difficult for our schools to find qualified leaders. An internship is a valuable way to prepare educators for the demanding roles held by school and district leaders. Current funding for the principal/administrator internship program does not meet current demands. Last year, only 42 percent of the administrator internships could be funded. This item fully funds the internship applicants for the 1999-00 school year. Proposed funding: \$600,000 GF-S.
- **A Professional Standards Board for Educators:** The Governor believes Washington needs a professional educators standards board that will give teachers and administrators the authority and responsibility for creating and upholding the highest standards for entering and remaining in their profession – a responsibility we give to many other professions in this state including doctors, lawyers, accountants, architects, and engineers. These boards provide the public with assurance of the competence of practitioners. A professional standards board will mean higher standards for educators – and that means higher standards of education for our students. Proposed funding: \$300,000 GF-S.

Scholarships to Students Who Meet Standards

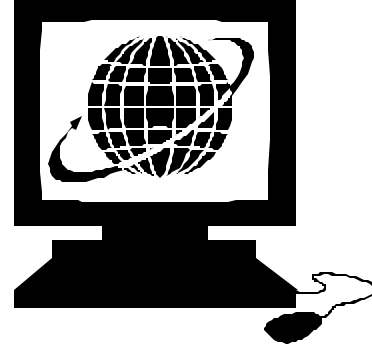
Governor Locke's popular Washington Promise Scholarship program is off to a strong start. In its first year of implementation, the first year of a two-year scholarship worth \$1,125 per year was awarded to 2,250 high school seniors in the top 10 percent of their high school class. With the implementation of the 10th grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning, it is now possible for Promise Scholarships to be awarded based on the results of the 10th grade test, which is better than relying on class ranking.

Under this proposal, 10th graders from low- to middle-income backgrounds will be eligible for a full two-year scholarship (at community college tuition rates) when they meet standards by passing all four components of the 10th grade test. Once admitted to the college of their choice in Washington State, they can use their scholarship to help them with college expenses.

Expand Information Technology Training

Washington's high technology industries are in need of many more skilled and qualified workers than are available. A 1998 survey by the Washington Software Association estimated that "64,000 more workers are needed in the software industry alone in the next three years." To help address this shortage, the American Electronics Association Higher Education Task Force recently recommended that more resources go to expand existing programs and to increase competitively offered high technology grants to schools.

Currently, a \$1 million per year information technology grant program helps schools improve the high technology preparation of their students. New funding will more than double this program in Fiscal Year 2001 to help even more schools prepare high school students to achieve skills certification for information technology careers. Proposed funding: \$1.2 million GF-S.



Making Schools Safer

In light of tragic events at our nation's schools, and in recognition of the fact that more can be done to help schools maintain safe, secure, and civil environments, the Legislature in 1999 responded to Governor Locke's request to improve funding levels for school security. A competitive grant process provided funds to increase security at school buildings.

The 2000 supplemental budget funds an additional 29 school districts that have demonstrated their need to improve school security, bringing the total number of districts served in the 1999-01 Biennium to 104. Proposed funding: \$5.2 million GF-S.